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INNER-CITY SCHOOLS ARE ONE BIG LAB.

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DISCUSSED ARE THE MUTUAL BENEFITS FOR PHILADELPHIA'S INNER-CITY SCHOOLS AND TEMPLE UNIVERSITY'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION WHICH ARE DERIVED FROM THE VARIOUS TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS WHICH USE THE SCHOOLS AS A LABORATORY. METHODS COURSES AND STUDENT TEACHING TAKE PLACE IN GHETTO SCHOOLS AT BOTH THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS. ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER TRAINEES WILL BE APPOINTED TO PHILADELPHIA SCHOOLS. THE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING PRESERVICE TRAINING IN THESE SCHOOLS IS SAID TO BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE SCHOOLS' POWER TO KEEP THE PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS. THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE "SOUTHERN EDUCATION REPORT," VOLUME 3, NUMBER 9, MAY 1968. (NH)

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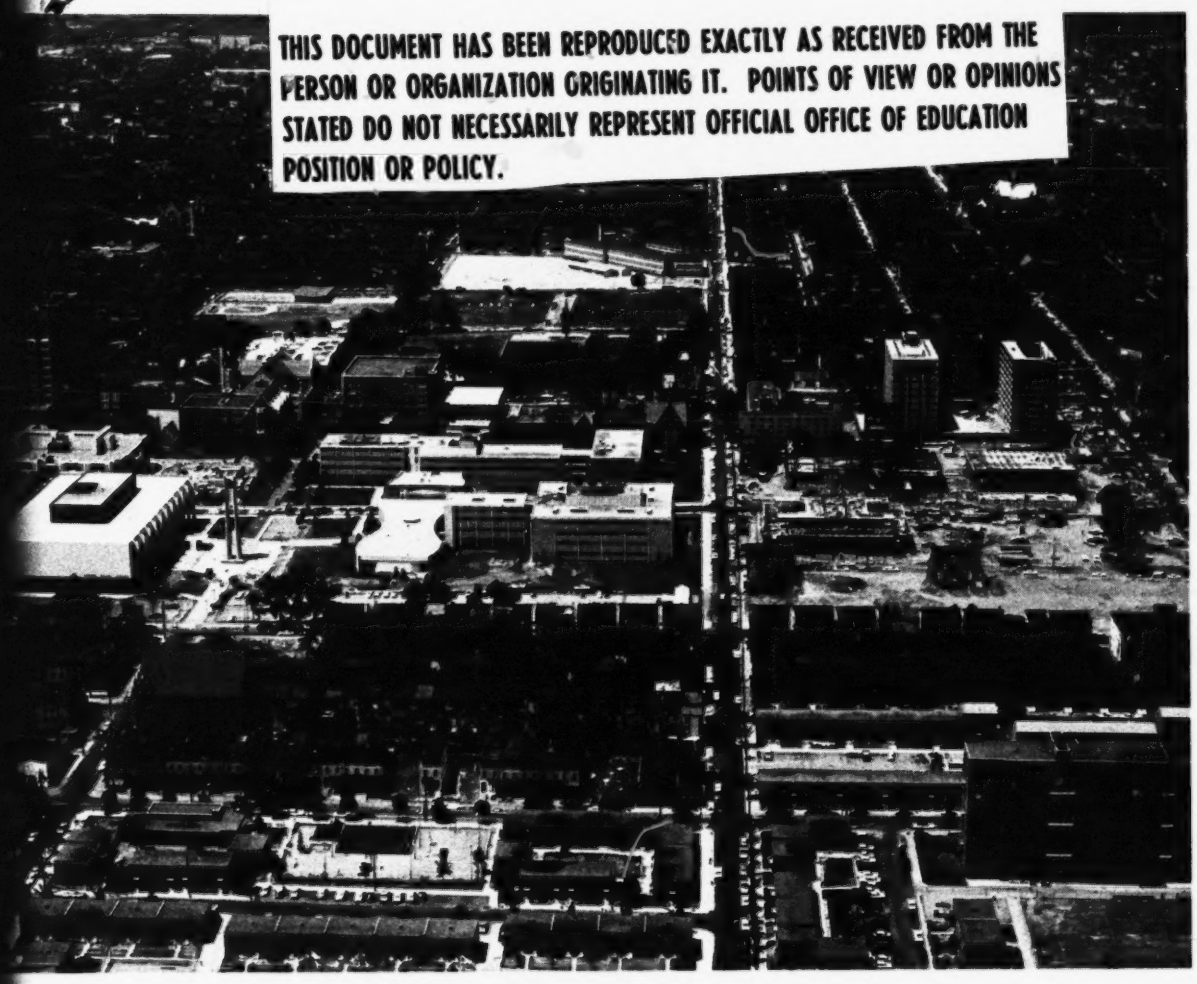

INNER-CITY SCHOOLS ARE ONE BIG LAB

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Schools in the inner-city of Philadelphia, Pa., are one big laboratory where Temple University trains its future teachers. It could hardly be otherwise. Most of Philadelphia is inner-city and Temple rests squarely in the middle of it.

Trainees from Temple's college of education have always been found learning their profession in the city's slum-area schools. Courses on the disadvantaged and how to teach them are not new at Temple. But a group of new programs reflects a greater Temple campaign to make its faculty and teacher trainees catalysts in the chemistry of changing the lives of urban poor. The formula is in the mix in the schools where a change for the better is needed most.

The chemistry of this co-operative venture with the Philadelphia school system is also working changes at the university. It is making the college faculty better informed and more realistic in its instruction because both learning and teaching are done in the schools where the problems are. Fifty-eight per cent of the city's public-school pupils are Negroes.

There are 21 Temple programs in which faculty and students utilize the Philadelphia public schools including the university's well-known Teacher Corps program. But four of the newer projects show the specific direction Temple is taking in training its future teachers in the difficult laboratory of the inner-city school where most of them will be teaching later. In the four programs, about 550 students are involved in 73 schools.

First, 80 selected juniors take their methods courses, the how-to-teach courses, in eight schools around Temple. This is the Elementary Program in Inner City Teaching (EPICT). The college students watch public-school teachers at work in the schools under the guidance of professors. With their impressions still vivid, they join in seminars in the same setting with college faculty.

Second, all elementary education majors—360 this year—do their senior-year student teaching in special centers throughout the city. In these centers, the students receive three kinds of supervision in classroom work—from a co-operating teacher, the school principal and college faculty.

About 40 other seniors do their student teaching in mathematics in 18 ghetto junior high schools.

On the graduate level, Project Primesite is a three-year program leading to the master's degree in education with an emphasis on teaching disadvantaged students in inner-city schools. In addition to special courses for this program, candidates spend three summers working with youngsters in social agencies, day camps and other places where disadvantaged children are helped. In the third year, the post-baccalaureate year, a Primesite trainee spends a full year as a student teacher in an inner-city school—with the salary of a beginning teacher. Eight students are now in the program.

While the current emphasis is on preschool and elementary education in the undergraduate programs, others similar to EPICT and the student teaching centers will be organized for prospective secondary teachers next year. By the time many Temple students arrive at the college of education, they already have had experience in the ghettos, working with social agencies and tutoring to gain experience.

Of the 360 student elementary teachers, about 80 per cent will take teaching jobs, said Charles Adelman, co-ordinator of the elementary program on leave from the Philadelphia school system. He quoted the figure with pride in what he says is a growing holding power of the city's schools on teachers. He said 80 per cent of the new teachers will go into Philadelphia schools, which largely means inner-city schools. He said the same is probably true of future secondary teachers.

"This is where the available jobs are. And these schools are where they

have had their training," said Adelman. He and other Temple faculty said another major reason for the holding power is a surge of interest in teaching careers in ghetto schools.

First-hand knowledge of the children, their background of cultural starvation, their learning problems and the inner-city school where these pupils are taught helps to eliminate fears which many of the college students have harbored about ghetto teaching.

After a student-teaching tour "the fear is gone," said Dr. Betty Schantz, director of student teaching. "They find the children are just children." School officials and the student teachers themselves agree.

"They recognize the kids for what they are, not what they thought they were," said Carl A. Walz, principal of McKinley Elementary School, where half the pupils are Negro, half of them Puerto Ricans. It is an aging stone structure nearly surrounded by signs marking the slum area as the "turf" of competing teen-age gangs. This is a school where the future teachers are conscious of the hazards of living as well as the problems of teaching poor children. Violence and crimes are a way of life.

The presence of the college trainees at McKinley, all young women, improves the quality of education at the school, said Walz. "They stimulate our own staff to work harder, to really work. I wonder if I could compete with some of these Temple students. We're dealing with the cream of the crop."

The young women, most of them from middle-class backgrounds, are aware of the tough job they face but often they are grateful for the harsh confrontation with reality.

"You open a book and you're out. It puts you on trial," said one student teacher.

"The inner-city is like a bomb, ready to explode," said another. "The child needs a lot. He needs most for somebody to make him learn. Just a book won't help. I feel much more prepared for this experience."

The often gray and shabby life in the slums is a shock to the teachers-to-be, most of them with a suburbanite heritage. But they soon see that the ghetto is THE world for its children. "You can't change their world. You have to get them interested in their own world," said another of the McKinley trainees.

Teaching college methods courses in the slum-school setting also has swept away the cobwebs of bookish sameness for many of the Temple faculty members in the newer programs. "They have the ideal put into a framework of reality," said Adelman, who directs the program for all elementary majors.

This kind of experience goes beyond methods professors and student-teaching supervisors. Dozens of specialists—in psychology, reading, health and other fields—act as a support team for college faculty, student teachers, and teachers in the schools.

Lines of communication between Temple and the public schools work both ways. In addition to college faculty teaching in the schools, school teachers and administrators often are invited to the university for seminars with professors, to help screen graduate students, and to aid in the teaching of regular courses.

Current programs are just the beginning of making the real world of school and pupil problems a busy laboratory for Temple's college of education. Being planned is a model school district, a cluster of schools in the immediate area around the college where new programs will be put into practice to help children and train teachers.

But the objective reaches far beyond the teacher training division of the university. "Part of the total plan," said Dr. Paul Eberman, dean of the college, "is to develop a real partnership, not only between the schools and the university, but with the community itself—social and other agencies, both government and private." These plans are not fully formed yet, but the direction is evident.